

CONTACT REPORT

Re: Botschafterrat a.D. Gustaf HILGER.

Written: 9 February 1957.

Background. I first met Dr. and Mrs. Hilger in December, 1952, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Taquey. The Taqueys are old friends and, although he works for OOB in Washington, they seem never to have questioned my ODAID status. Was introduced through Hilger as a graduate student studying Russian at Georgetown and planning to return to Dept of State employment when course completed. Hilger never seemed to question this and made various remarks to third parties indicating he accepted it. Saw quite a bit of Hilgers during 1953, often at the Taquey's with Ambassador Kennan present. In December, 1956, when I was about to leave for Bonn, the Taqueys asked me to take certain small gifts to the Hilgers. Since I felt that Hilger could be a useful contact, I wrote him that I was happy to inform him that I had been assigned to Bonn, would be arriving there in January, and would be glad to attend to any shopping he might wish me to do for him in the States. He replied, requesting plastic garment bags, and telling me he saw many Americans in Bonn, notably the brothers Littel and Ernest Wiener of USIB.

I arrived in Bonn 20 January and telephoned Hilger 22 January. He invited me to dinner at his apartment, Wednesday 23 Jan. 1900 hrs.

Since my acquaintance with Hilger was already known to the German Foreign Office from my contacts back at the Department (notably Dr. Wilhelm Turnwald, First Secretary in the German Embassy Washington), and since I had been introduced around the Embassy Bonn as something of a Soviet specialist assigned to report on German-Soviet matters, I made my contact with Hilger a completely open one, even to the point of having a local administrative assistant arrange for an official car to take me there. It can also be presumed that Hilger reports my contact as a perfectly normal call to the German Foreign Office.

Arrived at Hilger's apartment at Endenicher Allee 84-85, Bonn. Very warm reception by him and his wife. Aminties and conversations about mutual friends. Hilgers live very modestly in a 2 1/2 room apartment. He stated he goes to the Foreign Office two or three times a week for a half-day. Is depressed by the "inflation of grades" and great increase in size of For-Off since German sovereignty obtained. I gathered that he is used in a consultative capacity, and it is because of this that I feel he may eventually be very useful to us, either as a normal diplomatic contact of mine or as a willing KUBARK agent of someone else—but is not being consulted as much as he would like to be, or at as high a level. Is still keen of mind, energetic, and intensely interested in Soviet matters. Would obviously be only too pleased if, one day, quite within my cover, I were to "ask him for assistance with a problem" or "ask him for his impression of Ger For Off views or intentions re Soviet Union". Specifically volunteered to be of any assistance he could—the normal diplomatic business. I told him that my Chief, [] was going to do this and had arranged luncheons for this purpose. He agreed this better, and said that he might from time to time invite me to his place socially to see more of these officers whom I would be meeting.

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H. asked what my duties would be, again in a perfectly normal manner. I told him (and various Ger For Off people have been told the same thing by [] that I would be interested in German-Soviet relations and would have the usual accompanying but more tedious duties--responsibility for travel matters involving Soviets or satellites, covering the German institutes which put out scholarly writings on the Soviet Union, reporting on the German Communist Party, etc. I told him all this quite forthrightly, but, as cover warranted, with something less than completeness or precision. He said he often had visits from German scholars of Soviet matters, such as Klaus Mehnard, Koch from Munich, etc, and would invite me around to meet them. I took this occasion to say that the Department has a very high regard for German scholarship on Soviet matters, and he was pleased with this.

We talked at great length on my trip through the Soviet Union. He said I had seen some extremely interesting areas, and asked if "Dulles" had interviewed me after the trip. I replied that the Secretary was far too busy for that. He said words to the effect that "I don't mean your boss, I mean his brother." I laughed this off but cautiously admitted having talked at some length "with the right people within the Department".

There was much conversation about mutual friends in the Department. I knew most of the people about whom he asked. He mentioned no KUBARKERS, either in Washington or in Bonn. He asked me if I had ever met [] of the Department. I said I had known him briefly in Fall, 1945, when he was Political Adviser at Caserta. Then, and for the only time in the whole evening, Hilger became persistent--his questioning, although I made it clear that I did not want to discuss [] further. He said words to the effect of, "But where did he work when he left the Department about 1948?" and "Why did he leave the Government service to work for a labor union?", etc. I said that I had really lost track of him since 1945 or 1946, and had not recently seen any of my colleagues who had known him at Caserta. I finally gave up on his questioning. It is my impression that he has heard stories about [] post-1948 employment and circumstances, and was fishing for confirmations. I gather that H. saw [] while I was in the States. (This paragraph may be of minor interest to the Office of Security. I don't recall [] first name, but he was a rather senior FSO as late as 1946, if not later.)

I took leave of the Hilgers at 2230. They were obviously glad to have news of mutual friends and, for that matter, of the Soviet Union. We agreed to get together again soon for a long talk about Soviet matters. H does not have a car, and we agreed that as soon as I got mine we would drive to the Ruhr area to visit his daughter and son-in-law, whom I had met in the States in 1955.

Subsequent developments. On Feb 4 Prof. David Dallin called at the Chancery, and [] and I received him. He was giving a lecture in Bad Godesberg the following evening, and [] asked me to attend for the Political Section. On Feb 5 I telephoned Hilger, apologized for not having called sooner, and told him about the Dallin lecture. He said he knew that Dallin was in town, was having coffee with him that same afternoon, but was too tired to get to the lecture because he and his wife were off to Sweden the following morning. They are due to return to Bonn about 17 Feb, and I will call him then. I gather he is to lecture in Sweden; he often lectures in Germany.

end.

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